



Thank you Chairman Lund and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify, today. My name is Christina Kuo and I am the Executive Director for Common Cause Michigan.

First I want to thank the committee members for posting maps prior to the committee hearing. This is a big step forward compared to the 2001 redistricting. Although, the proposed maps were released a few days before this meeting and included some data, the initial analysis showed that what was not released does not allow the public to does not have cannot do an in-depth analysis based on their community's concern. In turn, the public does not have meaningful opportunity to give the Legislature feedback on the proposed maps. The public needs more data and time to look at the implication of these maps and what it means for the issues they care most about. Friday's release of data is the equivalent to green-washing by corporations; at first blush it gives the appearance of openness and transparency. However, a closer look shows that the data does not say much beyond generalized lines, some partisan information, and very little demographic information; not the census tracts, which can easily be produced. The public must have a real opportunity to provide meaningful feedback in a process that will impact their democratic representation in Congress for the next decade.

The other issue of concern is the proposed time-frame by legislative leadership. The arbitrary deadline of July 1, 2011, which is less than 2 weeks away, hurries a process that will affect voters for the next 10 yrs. This fast-tracking, coupled with the gloss of transparency, seems to be an attempt to limit public input, and reduce the ability of the media, the public and others to review the new districts. Under Michigan law, the legislature has until November 1, 2011 to finish this task. By taking the summer and having hearings outside of Lansing, it would provide ample opportunity for input by all interested parties. It would also allow the legislature time to develop the best maps for the people of Michigan, instead of the best maps for politicians.

From the limited data, the public can only see that on its face the Voting Rights Act was complied with and the partisan break-down of the Congressional districts. But we cannot say for certain because the requisite data was not released. From the limited analysis we were able to do, it shows that the map drawers probably engaged in some partisan gerrymandering to achieve the very uniquely shaped districts we see for the proposed 9th, 11th, and 14th Congressional districts. This is not a surprise since Michigan takes the to-the-winner-goes-the-spoils approach to redistricting; whichever party is in charge, it gets to draw maps to their advantage. This process has become the ultimate perk for politicians: politicians are picking their voters, instead of voters picking their politicians.

Just because we have always done something one way does not mean it is the right way. A number of states, like Iowa and Arizona, have taken the initiative and truly opened up their redistricting process to public participation and scrutiny. The

transparency and ample opportunities for public input have reduced the partisan advantage taking that we see here in Michigan. It is not too late for the Michigan Legislature to provide voters with real opportunities to participate in the redistricting process by adopting the procedures proposed by my partners in the Michigan Redistricting Collaborative:

- Post redistricting plans (including ALL data behind maps) to be available on the Legislature's web site for 30 days before passage.
- Each chamber holds least two committee meetings to receive testimony about the plan.
- The Legislature holds at least four public hearings around the state to allow direct comment by the public.
- The Legislature provides a statement for each district explaining how the boundaries were drawn and how the district has been changed.

I hope this committee will consider doing the right thing and release the data that is needed for the public and media to do meaningful analyses of the proposed plans and to slow down a process that does not need to be fast-tracked.